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COMPENSATORY PRACTICES IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.
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A NUMBER OF COMPENSATORY EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO FACILITATE THE COLLEGE ENTRY OR FURTHER THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS. FOR EXAMPLE, SOME PROGRAMS ARE BEING CONDUCTED BY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND SUCH FOUNDATIONS AS THE NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP SERVICE AND FUND FOR NEGRO STUDENTS TO RECRUIT DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS WHO WOULD NOT APPLY TO COLLEGE UNLESS ENCOURAGED, AND SPECIAL FUNDS HAVE BEEN EARMARKED TO AID BOTH THE TALENTED STUDENT AND THE ACADEMIC RISK. IN ADDITION, A NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS HAVE MODIFIED THEIR ADMISSIONS CRITERIA TO ACCEPT DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS WITH POTENTIAL FOR COLLEGE WORK. ANOTHER EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE THROUGH A VARIETY OF SUMMER PREPARATORY PROGRAMS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CONDUCTED AT THE COLLEGES THEMSELVES. SOME INSTITUTIONS HAVE OFFERED REMEDIAL CURRICULUMS, BUT THEY HAVE FOUND THAT THERE IS LIMITED EVIDENCE THAT THESE COURSES IMPROVE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE. ALTHOUGH THE NUMBER OF COMPENSATORY PROGRAMS HAS INCREASED, FEW COLLEGES HAVE INSTITUTED THESE PRACTICES, AND THOSE THAT HAVE SERVE ONLY SMALL NUMBERS OF DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS. BECAUSE MANY INSTITUTIONS ARE TRYING TO MAINTAIN HIGH ADMISSIONS STANDARDS, INCREASING PRECOLLEGE COMPENSATORY PROGRAMS WHICH UPGRADE THESE STUDENTS' EDUCATION IS A PARTICULARLY PROMISING WAY TO HAVE THEM ADMITTED. HOWEVER, THESE AND OTHER COMPENSATORY PROGRAMS MUST BE SYSTEMATICALLY EVALUATED. INCLUDED IS A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MORE THAN 75 REFERENCES. THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN "IRCD BULLETIN," VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2, MARCH 1966. (EF)

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HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE DISADVANTAGED

The accompanying article in this issue of the Bul- eport which will appear ompensatory Education: ublished by the College n September 1966. This irty percent of the col- country, indicates that of the respondents are pensatory practices di- of college students from However, fifty percent sisting fewer than thirty figures do not include is sponsored by several summer compensatory rve from forty to more ch participating institu- versities providing pro- ar, the vast majority student bodies. Thus, f activity in this area, igher education are still

tive insufficiency of ef- available to the disad- exist are generally in- the problems to which Wilkerson's article in- and practices designed s of socially-disadvan-taged status are less promising than those geared toward facilitating entry. The latter efforts have given much attention either to the more affluent minority-group youth, or to the academically-talented youth who is too poor to go to college without substantial assistance.

If opportunities in higher education are to be provided for large numbers of socially-disadvantaged youth, it will be necessary to address our attention not only to expanding our woefully insufficient efforts in those activities which primarily require a greater application of resources, i.e. talent search, scholarships, remedial courses, and modified admission standards. In addition to the issues of entry and financial support, there is the pervasive problem of academic achievement in young people whose backgrounds have left them poorly prepared for serious academic pursuits. Simple programs of subject re-

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COMPENSATORY PRACTICES IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Compensatory practices in higher education may be categorized according to whether they facilitate college entry or further academic success of socially-disadvantaged students. The former type of activities include special recruitment practices, financial aid, modification of admission criteria, and pre-admission preparation. Among those designed to foster scholastic achievement are remedial studies, extensions of the four-year program, special counseling and guidance services, and tutoring in college. It is of interest to examine those practices which are especially important or which represent innovations in the field of compensatory higher education.

Special Recruitment Practices

Special efforts to recruit socially-disadvantaged students have received major emphasis by many colleges during the past few years. Particularly notable has been the quest for Negro students by prestige institutions in the East. These efforts have largely affected the more affluent Negroes but have begun to reach Negroes from poorer families, as well.

Referrals by the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students (NSSFNS), which has been involved in this field for many years, are now supplemented by the direct activities of some institutions. At least two cooperative programs for recruiting Negro students have recently been developed by colleges and universities in various parts of the country. The Cooperative Program for Educational Opportunity, sponsored jointly by the eight Ivy-League and Seven-Sister colleges, undertakes to recruit "students qualified for one of the colleges but who would not apply without encouragement." This project is said to be largely responsible for the doubling of Negro admissions to these schools between the fall of 1964 and the fall of 1965. The College Assistance Project (Hoy Plan), sponsored jointly by NSSFNS and 110 institutions, consists of regional groups of admission and scholarship officials who visit Negro institutions which are "usually overlooked" and seek "to uncover talent and refer it to the right college."

Financial Aid

Whether they are talented or not, socially-disadvantaged youths who are attracted by special recruitment practices usually require financial assist-

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ance to enter college; and institutions of higher education are increasingly making such help available.

Financial aid to socially-disadvantaged students is largely a continuation by many institutions of their long-standing practice of providing scholarship aid and other forms of monetary assistance to individual students with demonstrated academic talent. Such activities appear to represent extensions to the disadvantaged of the general "talent search" and are directed mainly toward bright students who also happen to be poor. However, relatively little money is going to students who are "academic risks." (Financial aid to less-talented students is usually associated with additional compensatory practices designed to help them overcome their educational handicaps.) Efforts to provide financial assistance both to the talented and the "academic risks" have been strengthened by the creation of special funds earmarked for socially-disadvantaged youth.

Modification of Admission Criteria

Socially-disadvantaged students who are obviously talented can compete -- not only for scholarships but also for college admission -- on the basis of standards which apply to other students. But disadvantaged youth who are academically handicapped often require some modification of admission criteria in order to enter college and demonstrate their potential. Increasing numbers of institutions are effecting such modifications. Thus, many disadvantaged students whose high-school grades and/or performance on College Board, SCAT, or other entrance examinations would normally bar them from college, are nevertheless being admitted on the basis of recommendations from their high schools, often supplemented by personal interviews.

Pre-Admission Preparation

Probably the most dramatic compensatory development in higher education during recent years is the conduct of a variety of preparatory summer programs for high-school students in a wide range of institutions. Most of the programs are directed toward talented youth, but some of them seek to involve "academic risks." Although somewhat similar pre-college preparatory programs -- mainly with high-school graduates -- have previously been conducted by a few institutions, the big impetus for this type of program came during the summer of 1964, when hundreds of disadvantaged high-school students spent several weeks studying at some of the major institutions of higher education. Most of these programs were continued during the following summer, and additional comparable efforts were initiated.

Typically, in these preparatory summer schools, high-school students below the senior year are brought to the college, all expenses paid. They are given from six-to-eight weeks of instruction in English, mathematics, study skills, and other fields. Competent high-school teachers generally provide the instruction, and college students supplement it with individual tutoring. Enriching social and cultural experiences are usually offered. Some of the programs call for the learners to return in successive years. The general purpose is to identify disadvantaged students with college potential before the end of high school and to strengthen their academic achievement and motivation in order to facilitate and encourage college entrance.

Remedial Studies

Colleges which accept students who are "academic risks" frequently attempt to reverse their educational deficiencies by means of remedial studies. Although the practice of offering non-credit remedial courses -- mainly in English but also in mathematics -- is still widespread, it appears to be losing ground. A substantial number of institutions have recently ceased this practice for a variety of reasons. A major cause of discontinuation is the paucity of evidence that these courses improve academic performance. Students enrolled in remedial studies are said to lack motivation and involvement in them, but their disinterest is probably related to the poor quality and planning of these compensatory practices.

Although few innovations are being made in remedial studies, several institutions have developed comprehensive remedial curricula during the past six or eight years. The program of the Woodrow Wilson Branch of the Chicago City Junior College provides an example of remedial studies that go beyond the usual non-credit courses and study-skills workshops. Nevertheless, these efforts, like the remedial curricula of most other colleges, have been relatively unsuccessful.

In 1959, the Chicago institution began a special one-year, non-credit remedial program known as the "Basic Curriculum" for full-time freshmen who scored in the lowest tenth of their class on a battery of tests. Students are required to take a rhetoric and a remedial-reading course as well as a year's sequence in social science and natural science. They may select a course from a group of non-academic subjects such as speech, music, and art. Despite these programmatic features, very few of the students finish junior college. What began as remedial education has, as a result, been re-oriented toward preparation for employment and the acquisition of marketable skills. Instruction in such fields as consumer economics and speech provides these students with some education beyond high school, but it can hardly be considered higher education.

Extensions of the Four-Year Program

Project Apex, which began at New York University in the fall of 1965, is a compensatory program involving an extension of the four-year under-graduate course. Supported by the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity, the Project enrolled sixty socially-disadvantaged youth selected from the June graduating classes of two high schools in depressed areas of New York -- "Negroes, Puerto Ricans and very poor whites with no expectation of going to college and few formal qualifications for higher education." They are studying as a group at the University's School of Education, where they will devote the first three years to special remedial courses designed to qualify them for academic work on the junior and senior levels. The aim is to prepare these students to teach in slum

schools. Although relatively few institutions have formal extensions of the four-year program such as Project Apex, extra time is frequently available to undergraduates who need it.

Some General Observations

Compensatory programs of colleges and universities have grown markedly in extent and intensity during the past two or three years. It is important to note, however, that proportionately few of the nation's institutions of higher learning have thus far begun to develop compensatory programs and practices; and most of these are serving very small numbers of socially-disadvantaged students.

The recent stress upon assisting Negro youth to get a college education undoubtedly reflects the increasingly important role of the Negro people in the life of the nation. While such an emphasis is important, there appears to be undue neglect in providing compensatory services on the college level for disadvantaged young people of other minority groups. Moreover, except for the work of a few institutions, the vast population of socially-disadvantaged white youth in rural areas, particularly in the South, seems hardly to have been touched by recent compensatory developments in higher education.

Several of the great foundations have made impressive financial contributions to compensatory programs, mainly for disadvantaged Negro students. This development is reminiscent of the massive intervention of another group of foundations during an earlier period, just before and after World War I. The foundations then had a different role to play in the education of Negroes; instead of contributing toward higher educational levels, the earlier efforts were decisive in stimulating the revival of Negro education following its virtual destruction in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Current and increasing efforts to attract socially-disadvantaged college students tend to collide with recent trends toward higher and higher admission standards. Most institutions resolve the conflict by restricting their recruiting efforts to disadvantaged students whose talent has already been demonstrated. It would seem, however, that full commitment to the compensatory principle calls for increased efforts to enroll and help "risk" candidates among disadvantaged high-school graduates.

The development of pre-college preparatory programs for disadvantaged high-school students -- especially the new summer schools on college campuses -- constitutes an alternative and very important approach to the problem of maintaining high admission standards and recruiting larger number of disadvantaged students. It warrants further extension.

This recent increase of pre-college preparatory programs indicates that a number of colleges are beginning to move directly into the field traditionally pre-empted by the secondary school. That there is need for them to do so reflects the widespread failure of the public school in adequately educating large numbers of socially-disadvantaged young people.

Whereas many pre-college preparatory programs include imaginative and apparently valid curricular innovations designed to overcome academic deficiencies born of social disadvantage, the special college-level curricular programs and practices serving compensatory ends are seldom as well conceived. Most of the latter seem to fit the somewhat dreary pattern of "remedial courses" which have plagued many generations of low-achieving students with scant benefit to most of them. There is a need for fresh approaches in special curricular programs for disadvantaged students on the college level.

Although the careful assessment of students' performances is frequent and practically universal on all levels of American education, the careful appraisal of educational programs is rare; and it is not surprising, therefore, that very few of the compensatory programs in higher education have been systematically evaluated.

One cannot but be impressed with the humanitarian and social motivations which seem to underlie most of the efforts to enroll socially-disadvantaged youth and to help them succeed in college. However, one wonders whether this "social-uplift" rationale limits the effectiveness of compensatory practices. It would seem that compensatory programs less oriented toward charity might contribute more fully to educational development. One more desirable motivation, which underlies the efforts of some institutions of higher learning, is based on the conviction that the interaction of socially-disadvantaged and more-privileged students is beneficial to both groups and to the college, as well.

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mediation are not adequate. Attention will need to be given to a variety of more serious problems, the answers to which may not be readily available. Systematic attention to the problems of disadvantaged youth in higher education will require that we develop mechanisms for the modification of attitudinal and learning patterns among young adults who are inefficient learners. It may be that our concern with additional exposure and reduced pace, as in traditional approaches to remedial courses, may be inappropriate until attitudes toward significant aspects of the learning process have been modified. Special tutoring may also be wasteful in the absence of appropriately-adapted learning patterns and work habits.

For young adults who enter college with significant information gaps and impaired skills for the acquisition and storage of information, efforts directed at improved reading may not provide an adequate basis for academic success soon enough. We must develop alternative means by which these students may learn to process and acquire information. Audio-visual aids and computer-based instruction may hold promise for meeting their needs.

More serious examination of the relationship of the availability of social or cultural reference groups to attrition rates of college students who are mem-